STATEMENT

BY

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OF THE KINGDOM OF LESOTHO TO THE UNITED NATIONS

IN THE

GENERAL DEBATE OF THE SECOND COMMITTEE

10 OCTOBER 2013
NEW YORK

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Mr. Chairman,

I wish to congratulate you and the members of the Bureau on your election. We are confident that under your able leadership, this Committee will succeed in fulfilling its mandate. I assure you of my delegation’s full support.

I align myself with the statements delivered by the distinguished Permanent Representatives of Fiji, Ethiopia, Lao People’s Democratic Republic and Benin, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, the African Group, Landlocked Developing Countries and the Least Developed Countries respectively.

Mr. Chairman,

The Second Committee begins its work with an agenda that is compounded with critical development processes in preparation for the post-2015 development agenda. We recently met two weeks ago, to review progress made in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in a Special Event organized by the President of the General Assembly. We heard the promising news of achieving half of the MDGs in some parts of the developing world, while we were also apprised of the countries that are lagging behind. Poverty remains pervasive even in countries that have had many years of steady economic growth. Behind the positive indicators of growth, remain the increasing populations of people living in extreme poverty. Our interpretation of economic growth has to be demonstrated by its ability to reduce poverty through, among others, creation of decent jobs that would also result in improved standards of living.
Mr. Chairman,

Allow me to take a moment to highlight some of the development challenges facing my country. Science informs us that about 71 percent of the earth’s surface is covered by water while land coverage is only 29 percent. Coincidentally, the topography of my country represents approximately 30 percent of arable land. Beyond the disproportional size of country’s productive land lies a myriad of adverse environmental effects. These include among others; vulnerability to climate change. The net impact is the increase in extreme weather events such as floods and droughts. These climatic effects have caused unprecedented soil erosion. Human activities have also not been helpful in curbing the problem of acute land degradation. Poor land use management has thus become our greatest challenge. The Government of Lesotho has not relented on its efforts to undertake land reclamation programmes despite the enormity of the lost soil cover and budgetary constraints.

Mr. Chairman,

The agriculture sector plays a pivotal role in the development of the developing countries. It underpins food security, poverty eradication and rural development, to mention only a few. It is therefore, critical to take decisive action to increase investment in agriculture. Increased investment in agriculture should be directed towards raising productivity and increasing the resilience of small-scale farmers. It is also important to pay attention to sustainable consumption through integrating agriculture and environmental policies into broader rural development policies to ensure that ecosystems continue to sustain farming systems.
Mr. Chairman,

Lesotho, like other Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs), continues to face challenges inherently linked to her geographical handicap. The burden of transport costs, cumbersome and slow export processing procedures contribute to the slow trade development in Lesotho. In this connection, increased international assistance for export diversification, infrastructure development institutional capacity-building and better market access are essential for the integration of LLDCs into international trading system. It is therefore, our hope that the Comprehensive 10-year Review Conference on the Implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action scheduled for 2014 will reinvigorate the international community, including the United Nations system, to critically consider special needs of and challenges faced by LLDCs, and to support the development of a more comprehensive, common action-oriented framework of LLDCs for the next decade.

In the like manner Mr. Chairman, Lesotho as one of the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) considers trade as an engine of development. The LDCs experienced a fall in their share in global trade, which remains low, at only 1.1 percent. We shall not refrain from calling for a successful conclusion of the Doha Round of Negotiations. Special attention must be paid to our economic fragility and, in this regard, we emphasize the importance of trade facilitation through the implementation of duty-free quota-free market access for all LDCs’ products.
Mr. Chairman,

Much has been said during this general debate about our development aspirations. However, financial resources are the core of development. There can be no development without financing. Official Development Assistance (ODA) is the oil in the wheels of development, particularly in countries like Lesotho which does not have sufficient domestic resources to meet development needs. Yet we note with disappointment that overall, aid is declining. ODA has fallen short of the United Nations target of 0.7 percent. As we move towards the post-2015 development agenda, ODA should be the basis for a renewed and strengthened global partnership.

Mr. Chairman,

In conclusion, I wish to flag financing for development process as a fundamental to the restoration of growth and leverage for fragile economies. We need to join hands and work as a collective to advance the promotion of prosperity and sustainable future of our citizens.

I THANK YOU